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SUBJECT: OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL: MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRS
STATEMENT

1. Post is authorized to deliver the following statement at the March 5, 2009 Permanent Council.

Begin text of statement:

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

On behalf of the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, France, the Russian Federation and the United States, I have the following statement to make:

The Minsk Group Co-Chairs condemn the shooting incident near Goradiz along the Line of Contact on February 26, when shots were fired during a monitoring mission carried out by the Personal Representative of the Chair-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk.

We call on the parties to adhere scrupulously to the ceasefire and express our deep regret that over 30 people died and 50 were wounded in 2008 as a result of ceasefire violations.

We condemn in strongest terms the violation of the ceasefire during the course of an OSCE monitoring mission, particularly given that local commanders provided written security guarantees to the OSCE monitoring mission just prior to their monitoring activities on February 26.

We call for an explanation from the parties for how such an egregious violation of the ceasefire could have taken place.

We regret that not all of the parties implemented the recommendation made by the Minsk Group Co-Chairs at the Ministerial Council meeting in Helsinki in December 2008 to pull snipers back from the Line of Contact.

We express full support and admiration for the work of Personal Representative Kasprzyk and his team, and underline the importance of monitoring the Line of Contact as a confidence building measure between the sides.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.
CLINTON